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Facebook Removes Trump Campaign Ads Linking Refugees to COVID-19  
by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

Social media platform Facebook announced Wednesday it had removed advertisements created by US President Donald Trump's reelection campaign that claimed - without evidence - accepting refugees from abroad would increase the risk of the novel coronavirus spreading in the US.

The since-deleted, 15-second ads started running on the platform with at least 38 different versions on Tuesday before Facebook caught wind of the video clips and opted to remove them from the site.

The source-free ads claimed that accepting refugees into the US would increase Americans' risk of contracting COVID-19, and that policies put forth by Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden would welcome refugees from Syria, Somalia and Yemen by "700%."

A [longer, 30-second version of the advertisement](#) can still be viewed on Facebook's Ad Library; however, it is inactive and not being run across Facebook products. "Joe Biden is dangerous for America," the ad says in bold text toward the end.

Facebook insights on the extended advertisement indicate that it was specifically targeted at individuals in North Carolina, earning between 60,000 and 70,000 impressions when active. It potentially reached up to 1 million viewers.

The ad, which seemed most popular among men and women aged between 25 and 34, is estimated to have cost the campaign at most about \$1,000.

Andy Stone, a spokesperson for Facebook, [explained to The Hill](#) that the company opted to remove the ads because "we don't allow claims that people's physical safety, health, or survival is threatened by people on the basis of their national origin or immigration status."

Not too long after the ads were pulled from Facebook, Trump campaign spokesperson Courtney Parella shot back, reiterating that Biden's border and asylum policies would expose "Americans to further risk of exposure to COVID-19."

News of the advertisements came as the US State Department [announced late Wednesday](#) that it intends to slash the number of refugees admitted into the Land of the Free in fiscal year 2021 down to 15,000 - 3,000 less than the cap for fiscal year 2020. The proposed reduction would mark the lowest limit to date for the Refugee Admissions Program since Trump took office.

The department notes that the proposal "reflects the administration's continuing commitment to prioritize the safety and well-being of Americans, especially in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic."

The proposal is due to be reviewed by congressional lawmakers.

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Golden Retriever Taps Into Inner Rocker With Gene Simmons Mask - Video Club

Isla, an adorable golden retriever hailing from the UK's Somerset county, recently proved that even man's best friend knows a thing or two about rock 'n' roll, especially when there's peanut butter involved.

Footage obtained by video licensor ViralHog shows the 5-month-old pup standing behind a mask designed to make one look like Kiss bassist Gene Simmons. With a hole cutout around Simmons' mouth and peanut butter smeared around it, Isla instantly mirrors the rock star's signature stage move.

Bones, peanut butter and rock 'n' roll. Watch out world, Isla's coming!

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Hawkish London Think Tank Frets Russian Military Now Strongest Since Soviet Days

Ministry of defence of the Russian Federation

by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

According to a recent report by a London-based think tank, the Russian Armed Forces are at their strongest and most capable since the dissolution of the Soviet Union nearly 30 years ago, despite being considerably smaller.

When the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union dissolved itself in the final days of 1991, the Russian Federation emerged as just one of 15 new republics that inherited many of the Red Army's weapons of war. As the economic crisis in Russia deepened through the decade, the armed forces waned in power as well. Today, however, one UK think tank warns that more than two decades of rebuilding, reforming, and reinvesting have turned Russia's armed forces into their most potent since the Cold War ended.

On Wednesday, [the International Institute for Strategic Studies \(IISS\)](#) released a "[strategic dossier](#)" on Russian military modernization that documents the changes in thinking and practice in the Russian Armed Forces and some of their implications for the Western powers.

"Though significantly smaller than their Soviet predecessors, these forces are better equipped, with professional personnel increasingly prevalent," the report concludes. "When combined with Moscow's more assertive foreign policy, Russia's armed forces in 2020 constitute a capability that should not be ignored."

In 2018, [the Pentagon's National Defense Strategy](#) warned of "a resilient, but weakening, post-WWII international order" in which Washington's position as chief world power is receiving new challenges from nations such as Russia and China, which it identifies as "revisionist powers."



[The Indo-Pacific Strategy Report the following year](#) further characterized Russia as a "Revitalized Malign Actor," which it says "seeks to advance Moscow's strategic interests while undermining US leadership and the rules-based international order."

That an institute like the IISS would support such a notion should be unsurprising: [many of the think tank's top donors include defense contractors](#) such as Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Boeing and BAE Systems, as well as oil giants like Chevron and Shell - some of the central corporate forces that drive Western imperialist foreign policy.

According to the IISS, the Russian military was in a deep state of malaise until the 2008 conflict with Georgia, in which Russian forces came to the defense of nationalist groups in two breakaway republics of the Caucasian state - Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The "New Look" reform program that followed simplified command structures and prioritized brigades as the core of the new army. The result has been an increase in professionalism and capability that has enabled it to take part in the war in Syria, for example.

However, extensive technological modernization has helped increase their potency as well. Some of the new weapons the report notes include the Iskander-M short-range ballistic missile and T-72B3 main battle tank among the army; the 3M14 Kalibr cruise missile and the Project 955 Borei-class ballistic missile submarines among the naval forces; and the Su-35S and Su-57 fighter aircraft, as well as the Tu-160 supersonic bomber, which recently resumed production, among the aerospace forces.

The report also notes that Russia's nuclear forces, which survived the turbulent 1990s the best of any part of the armed forces, remain its most potent threat, especially with their new hypersonic capabilities and continuing shift from silo-based ballistic missiles to mobile launchers.

"Defense spending fell steeply in the early 1990s, a situation exacerbated by the 1998 financial crisis. It recovered somewhat during the early 2000s, with a notable further improvement for most of the 2010s. The government's goal now is to secure a steady state of funding that will support the reform and modernization progress made in the previous decade," the report notes. "While smaller by far than in the Soviet era, the defense industry is still significant, an important employer and a sector upon which some cities remain dependent."

While at 3.9% of its gross domestic product in 2019, Russia's defense spending burden was among the highest in Europe, in terms of dollar-equivalent spending budgets, Moscow spends just 3.4% of the world total on its military, according to an [April report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#) (SIPRI).

The SIPRI report notes that while Russia has the world's fourth-largest defense budget at \$65.1 billion per year, this utterly pales in comparison to the United States, which spends in excess of \$760 billion per year on defense, making up 38% of the world total. Also ahead of Russia are China and India.

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'Arrogant Provocation': Beijing Denounces US Air Force Patch Showing Grim Reaper on Drone Over China

by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)



Some US Air Force drone operators have donned a new patch design that evokes a future conflict with China: an MQ-9 Reaper drone soaring over a map of China with a “grim reaper” figure emblazoned on the wing. Beijing has denounced the move as “an extremely arrogant provocation.”

An image of the patch first appeared on September 24, [when Air Force Magazine reported on a set of exercises](#) being carried out by US Air Force and US Navy forces in California.

In the drills, the two branches practiced cooperating to coordinate strikes at land and sea targets, including in support of an amphibious offensive, the magazine noted. Dubbed “Agile Reaper,” the drills are part of the changing focus of the Pentagon away from the Middle East-centered War on Terror and [toward an East Asia-centered showdown with China and Russia](#), which Washington has described as “revisionist powers” and “malign actors.”

The exercises were hosted at Naval Air Station Point Mugu, but the drones were flown by a unit from Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico.

Curiously, photos of the patch seem to have been removed from US military photo sites, including Air Force Photos, the [Defense Visual Information Distribution Service \(DVIDS\)](#), and [the photo gallery on Holloman’s](#) web page. However, the patch can still be seen in a different photo of several airmen refueling a Reaper.

Beijing’s response to the story was furious: “This is an extremely arrogant provocation,” [an editorial in the Global Times on Tuesday said](#). “According to reports, the last time the US Air Force put a country on the patch was during the Vietnam War. Putting [a] map of China on patches, already a radical move, and publishing the picture, obviously the US military wants to send a strong signal.”

“Washington is stepping up its war preparations against China, and drones, which have been involved in assassination and other attacks around the world, will also play a role,” the editorial notes, referring to the United States’ use of a Reaper drone to assassinate Iranian Quds Force commander Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani and several top Iraqi military figures in Baghdad, Iraq, on January 3, 2020.

“This is the strategic signal sent by the US Air Force Magazine’s report on the MQ-9 Reaper drone.”

[In another Tuesday story, the Global Times noted](#) that “China can easily shoot down the US’ MQ-9 Reaper drones - a type of aircraft designed for anti-terrorism missions and ‘bullying’ armed forces without proper air defense systems - should the US send them and launch attacks on China.”

Fu Qianshao, a Chinese military aviation expert, told the publication that “the MQ-9 is not worth worrying about for China, because it does not possess stealth capabilities and flies at a low speed and low ceiling, which makes it an easy target for ground-to-air missiles.”

The US Congress is [presently considering a massive new weapons sale to Taiwan](#), an autonomous island just off the coast that Beijing considers a breakaway province and regards as part of its territory. Among the \$7 billion in weapons are \$400 million worth of MQ-9B Reaper drones and related equipment, [the Wall Street Journal reported](#).



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US Court Refuses to Dismiss Trump Admin Lawsuit Seeking Bolton's Book Proceeds

© AP Photo / Alex Brandon

by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

A US federal judge has declined an attempt by former national security adviser John Bolton to dismiss a lawsuit by the Trump administration that would appropriate the proceeds of his recently published tell-all book.

The US government has argued that Bolton did not follow the nondisclosure agreement he signed that gave him access to classified information, and thus forfeits the money he has made from book sales. However, Bolton claims former National Security Council [records management senior director Ellen Knight gave him the go-ahead](#) to publish the material.

Judge Royce C. Lamberth of the US District Court for the District of Columbia rejected Bolton's bid on Thursday, saying that "while the government may not prevent Bolton from publishing unclassified materials, it may require him to undergo a reasonable prepublication review process. The ... agreements are thus consistent with the First Amendment," [according to the Washington Post](#).

However, [the Trump administration previously tried unsuccessfully](#) to have publication of Bolton's book "The Room Where It Happened" blocked in June, arguing it contained classified information. Word of the book's potentially sensitive contents first broke in January in the days prior to Trump's impeachment trial, [at which time the National Security Council demanded](#) Bolton remove the classified information from the book.

Bolton was part of the Trump administration from April 2018 to September 2019, serving as Trump's national security adviser until their considerable disagreements on foreign policy toward Venezuela, the Koreas and several other countries came to a head and Trump fired Bolton. The depths of their differences in demeanor and philosophy only became fully known with the publication of Bolton's book, [which characterized the US president as capricious, petty and small-minded](#).

Mark S. Zaid, a lawyer who specializes in national security and whistleblower cases, told the Post the ruling sets "a horrible new precedent."

"Before this case the ... Government had never pursued anyone for simply sharing a draft manuscript with lawyers, literary agents or publishers, even though by law it was improper to do so," Zaid said. "As long as the manuscript was approved before actual publication, the US Government was satisfied. But now the rules have changed, and any dissemination can create liability."

Indeed, the Trump administration has pursued a parallel case against Edward Snowden, the former CIA employee and National Security Agency contractor who leaked a deluge of information about the government's domestic surveillance programs in 2013.

On September 29, the US District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia [entered a final judgment and permanent injunction against Snowden](#), ruling his 2019 book "Permanent Record"



had violated nondisclosure agreements he had signed with both agencies by his not submitting the manuscript for prepublication review by them.

The ruling also covered 56 speeches by Snowden and created a “constructive trust for the benefit of the United States over those sums and any further monies, royalties, or other financial advantages” he might get from the works.

Snowden has lived in Moscow since fleeing the United States with the damning material.

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‘Serious Threat’: Trump is Biggest Source of COVID-19 Misinformation, Study Finds

A recent analysis by Cornell University researchers of 38 million articles regarding the COVID-19 pandemic has determined that US President Donald Trump is the largest driver of misinformation when it comes to the deadly respiratory illness.

According to the [study’s abstract](#), media mentions of Trump “within the context of COVID-19 misinformation made up by far the largest share of the infodemic.” Specifically, Trump mentions made up 37.9% of what the researchers referred to as a “misinformation conversation.”

“The biggest surprise was that the president of the United States was the single largest driver of misinformation around COVID,” Sarah Evanega, the director of the Cornell Alliance for Science and the study’s lead author, [told the New York Times](#). “That’s concerning in that there are real-world dire health implications.”

The study, which was released Thursday and only reviewed articles from English-language media, outlines 11 topics of misinformation which include conspiracy theories like the one suggesting that the pandemic was manufactured by Democrats during the same time as Trump’s impeachment trial in January, as well as “miracle cures.”

In fact, the researchers found that the misinformation topic “miracle cures” made up a “disproportionately large amount of conversation compared to other misinformation sub-topics.” For instance, Trump was a large proponent of anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine as a treatment for COVID-19. Trump took the drug in May for a 14-day period and continued to tout its safety despite the US Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) warning in June that the drug can cause serious cardiac side effects in some patients.

Trump was also censored by Twitter in July after retweeting a video of Stella Immanuel, a Texas-registered physician, claiming that hydroxychloroquine is a cure for COVID-19. Immanuel had also made questionable claims about how gynecological problems come about from people having sex with witches and demons in dreams.

During an April 23 White House Coronavirus Task Force briefing, Trump also floated the idea that the injection of disinfectant chemicals could potentially treat COVID-19.

“I see the disinfectant, where it knocks it out in a minute. One minute. And is there a way we can do something like that, by injection inside or almost a cleaning. Because you see it gets in the lungs and it does a tremendous number on the lungs,” [Trump said at the time](#). “So it would be interesting to check that.”



Most recently, Trump has also repeatedly claimed that the US could have a vaccine for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, by October and that the US will have distributed 100 million doses of the drug by the end of the year. This claim has been [questioned by many health experts](#), including those at the World Health Organization, which doesn't expect a vaccine to be available until next year.

Throughout the pandemic, Trump has also frequently appeared in public without a mask, despite the CDC's mask-wearing recommendations.

"Misinformation about COVID-19 is a serious threat to global public health. If people are misled by unsubstantiated claims about the nature and treatment of the disease, they are less likely to observe official health advice and may thus contribute to the spread of the pandemic and pose a danger to themselves and others," the Cornell researchers concluded.

"Health protection strategies such as hygiene, sanitation, social distancing, mask wearing, lockdowns, and other measures will be less effective if distrust of public health authorities becomes sufficiently widespread to substantially affect public behavior."

"Specifically, misinformation about treatments for COVID disease can prompt people to attempt cures that might harm them, while fears and distrust about a possible vaccine could undermine the uptake of any vaccination campaign aiming to immunize the public at a later date," the researchers added.

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#### Greenland's Ice Sheet Melting at Fastest Rate in 12,000 Years, Study Finds

Ice loss from Greenland's ice sheet will cause sea levels to increase more during the 21st century than any ice loss during any 100-year period in the last 12,000 years, according to a new study published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

Using an ice-sheet model, [researchers](#) found that the most substantial pre-industrial rates of ice loss from the Greenland sheet, up to 6,000 billion metric tons per century, took place in the early Holocene period, which began nearly 12,000 years before the present.

Simulations of future mass loss from the southwestern Greenland ice sheet predict that the mass lost in the 21st century will be between 8,800 and 35,900 billion metric tons, which is higher than the maximum loss rates over the past 12,000 years.

The researchers based their analysis on past records of the ice sheet's movements and by analyzing the chemical composition of boulders that sit on former edges of glaciers or ice sheets, which are known as moraines. Through this analysis, the researchers were able to identify when ice retreated from the boulders.

The researchers thus concluded that the rate of mass loss from the Greenland ice sheet this century will exceed the Holocene rates.

Unless carbon pollution caused by burning fossil fuels is significantly reduced, these total sea level rises will become the "new normal," lead author Jason Briner, a professor of geology at the State University of New York at Buffalo, [told AFP](#). However, according to the researchers' model, it's too late to prevent the current century from taking its toll on the Greenland ice sheet.



"No matter what the future carbon emissions are going to be, the Greenland ice sheet will lose more ice this century than even during the warmest of times during the past 12,000 years," he added.

This is not the first study to show that Greenland is losing ice at a rapid rate. A [study](#) published last year in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences shows that Greenland's glaciers released around 286 billion tons of ice into the ocean between 2010 and 2018, compared to 51 billion tons between 1980 and 1990.

An [August study](#) also found that 28 trillion metric tons of ice disappeared from Earth's surface between 1994 and 2017. The research, conducted by scientists from the University of Leeds, the University of Edinburgh and University College London, also found that sea-level rises could reach a meter by the end of the century.

Many experts have warned that the melting of ice can decrease the Earth's ability to reflect solar radiation into space, which results in the additional absorption of heat by the sea and soil underneath the ice and increased warming of the planet.

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#### US Drugmaker Moderna Says COVID-19 Vaccine Won't Be Ready Before 2020 Election

US drugmaker Moderna revealed Wednesday that it won't seek an emergency use authorization (EUA) for its COVID-19 vaccine before November 25, more than three weeks after the US election.

"November 25 is the time we will have enough safety data to be able to put into an EUA file that we would send to the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) - assuming that the safety data is good, i.e. a vaccine is deemed to be safe," Moderna CEO Stéphane Bancel said in a [statement to the Financial Times](#).

Bancel also told the outlet that the company's vaccine won't be available before next spring.

"I think a late [first quarter], early [second quarter] approval is a reasonable timeline, based on what we know from our vaccine," Bancel noted.

In mid-September, however, Bancel told [CNBC](#) that Moderna should have sufficient data from its late-stage trial to determine whether its vaccine works in November.

The latest revelation casts doubt on US President Donald Trump's claims that the US could have a vaccine for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, by October and that the country will have distributed 100 million doses of the vaccine by the end of the year.

Moderna this week also published data in the New England Journal of Medicine that shows that its COVID-19 vaccine triggered an immune response in adults over the age of 55 equivalent to the immune system response exhibited in younger recipients of the vaccine.

Older COVID-19 patients see worse outcomes from the disease but some vaccines fail to immunize them, raising concerns on immunizing older, vulnerable populations, which, according to Trump, will be the first group of individuals to gain access to the potential vaccine before it is made available to the public.



The [recent trial](#), led by a team of researchers at Emory University, involved 20 adults between the ages of 56 and 70 and 20 adults aged 71 and older. The participants received two doses of either 25 micrograms or 100 micrograms of vaccine administered 28 days apart.

The study found that adverse events associated with the vaccine were mild to moderate and included fatigue, chills, headache, myalgia and pain at the injection site. The side effects were also found to be dose-dependent and more common following the second dose.

The researchers also found an increase in COVID-19 immune system antibodies in study participants who received the shots. While there was an increase in COVID-19 system antibodies after the first shot, the numbers rose even further following the second dose. In addition, the antibody responses in the participants "appeared to be similar to those previously reported among vaccine recipients between the ages of 18 and 55," the researchers noted.

"As those at highest risk for severe COVID-19 infection are older adults, it is crucial to understand how well the vaccine works in this age group," Amesh Adalja, an expert not involved in the trial, [told UPI](#).

Moderna's vaccine utilizes messenger RNA, or mRNA, to prompt the body into producing viral proteins to fight COVID-19.

Director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr. Anthony Fauci confirmed in a [statement](#) last week that there are currently four COVID-19 vaccine candidates undergoing Phase 3 clinical testing in the US, which are being developed by Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, Pfizer and AstraZeneca.

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North Korea Showing Favoritism to Trump by Delaying Tests of Growing Nuclear Arsenal - Analysts

by [Evan Craighead](#)

The suspension of denuclearization negotiations and weapons testing by North Korea will likely continue until after the US presidential election, as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been able to covertly build up his country's nuclear capabilities during US President Donald Trump's term, according to new analyses from US-based think tanks.

Sue Mi Terry, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and former senior analyst on North Korea for the CIA, participated in the CSIS' virtual North Korea [policy forum on September 24](#) and expressed doubt about a possible "October surprise" from Pyongyang "because this is an unusual election year where Kim wants to see Trump be elected."

"So I think that provocation will come, probably, during the transition period," she said, highlighting the period from November 3 to January 10 as a likely time frame for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) resumption of advanced weapon systems testing. Terry noted that the provocation could come after January 10 if Democratic nominee and former Vice President Joe Biden wins the upcoming US presidential election.



The world recently got a peek into Trump and Kim's relationship via Washington Post associate editor [Bob Woodward's book "Rage."](#)

"I cannot forget that moment of history when I firmly held Your Excellency's hand," the North Korean leader said in a letter to his US counterpart on December 25, 2018.

"The only two leaders who can do it are you and me," said Trump in response to Kim.

Citing the US president's recollection of events leading up to the summit between Trump and Kim in Singapore in June 2018, [Woodward wrote](#) that "for the first year of the Trump presidency, [then-Secretary of Defense James] Mattis had been living on permanent alert" over Pyongyang's repeated ballistic missile tests, which included a firing of the Hwasong-15 intercontinental ballistic missile. The DPRK conducted at least 21 test launches in 2017 alone. Trump, who took a [hard stance against North Korea](#) in 2017, conceded to Woodward in a recorded interview that Pyongyang and Washington almost engaged in a war.

Despite the historic nature of the Singapore summit, US-North Korea negotiations regarding denuclearization have since fallen apart, without a firm commitment from Kim.

"There was the willingness to engage at the high level, but then it kind of crumbled from there," explained John Delury, a professor at Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea, [to the Washington Post](#). "Trump's chaotic and distracted theatrics of politics meant that it didn't really create a lasting process."

Pyongyang also refused to allow Washington to inspect its weapons bunkers.

"North Korea hasn't stopped building nuclear weapons or developing missiles systems; they've just stopped displaying them," said Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), to the Post. "They stopped doing the things that made bad news cycles for Trump."

The CNS, located in Monterey, California, at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, is the US' largest nongovernmental organization "devoted exclusively to research and training on nonproliferation issues," [according to the center's website](#).

A confidential version of the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) North Korea sanctions committee's [interim report suggested](#) in early August that Pyongyang has "probably developed miniaturized nuclear devices to fit into the warheads of its ballistic missiles."

"The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is continuing its nuclear program, including the production of highly enriched uranium and construction of an experimental light water reactor," the report contended.

The panel issued the [full midterm report on Monday](#), accusing Pyongyang of exceeding its annual 500,000-barrel import limit for refined petroleum products within the first five months of 2020.

The 15-member UNSC panel claimed that satellite imagery of the DPRK showed that Pyongyang temporarily suspended coal exports in late January and resumed deliveries in late March. Experts detailed "ship-to-ship transfers" were made by North Korean vessels operating in "waters of another member state."

China and Russia questioned the basis for the panel's assertions in the interim report. [Moscow contended](#) the UNSC panel's issuance "does not provide objective, accurate and verifiable information or have enough solid imagery evidence."



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**'Re-Education Camp': US Cadet Sues Naval Academy Following Expulsion Over 'Racist'**

**Tweets**

by [Evan Craighead](#)

A 21-year-old cadet of the US Naval Academy claims service leadership is violating his First and Fifth Amendment rights and intends to expel him from the military school over social media posts that many have deemed racist.

Midshipman (MIDN) Chase Standage and his lawyers [filed a complaint](#) for declaratory and injunctive relief on September 30, claiming the Naval Academy had no legal basis to launch a probe into posts issued from his since-deleted Twitter account, [reported Courthouse News](#). The [investigation was launched](#) in June after [several individuals](#) called out Standage's "racist posts and comments on social media" and after Naval Academy Superintendent Vice Adm. Sean Buck released a video stating that racism and bigotry would not be tolerated at the school. "Go ahead, cut funds to the police ... Community policing by building relations is expensive and timely, anyways. Bullets, on the other hand, are cheap and in ready supply," he tweeted over the summer in reference to the "Defund the Police" movement, which seeks to lower police brutality and expand public government services through a reappropriation of taxpayer funds. He also issued tweets referring to so-called Antifa protesters and rioters as "terrorists." Standage also issued a social media post declaring that Breonna Taylor, the 26-year-old Black woman killed by Louisville Metro Police during a botched no-knock raid on March 13, "received justice" when a bullet fired by Det. Myles Cosgrove [fatally tore through her main pulmonary artery](#).

"This is really a case of first impression," said Standage's attorney Jeffrey McFadden in a phone interview with Courthouse News. "This guy is the first casualty in the academy's unconditional adoption of the woke culture."

"The next steps we take, as an institution, to create an inclusive environment to accomplish our mission will be far more difficult than removing a simple plaque," Buck said in the video, released ahead of the initial June probe into Standage's posts.

"The allegations set forth throughout the complaint make clear that the Superintendent, Commandant, and Deputy Commandant are intent on turning the Naval Academy into an 'anti-racist' laboratory and re-education camp," the complaint argues.

Standage's legal team alleged that Buck "ignored the recommendation of MIDN Standage's Black roommate and squad leader that MIDN Standage be retained."

Though the investigation into the midshipman's tweets wrapped late last month, the Naval Academy only announced that the ["appropriate administrative action"](#) had been taken against Standage. According to the midshipman's Wednesday filing, the decision handed down was expulsion.

[An annual survey by the MilitaryTimes](#) of 1,630 active-duty members of the US Armed Forces in fall 2019 revealed that 36% of respondents had observed evidence of "white supremacist and



racist ideologies in the military.” This presented a sharp uptick from the 22% of 829 active-duty respondents who claimed to have seen white supremacist signs in a [2018 poll](#). These signs included scrawling of swastikas on military equipment, tattoos showing one’s affiliation with a white supremacist group and Nazi-style salute greetings between troops. [The 2019 survey](#) also revealed that minorities in the US military were “significantly more likely to report cases of racist behavior than whites (53 percent to 30 percent).”

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GOP Fraudsters Face Charges Over Robocalls Aiming to Suppress Mail-In Ballots By Minorities by [Evan Craighead](#)

Two conservative tale-spinners are facing four felony counts each in Detroit, Michigan, after they allegedly conspired to intimidate potential voters via robocall and dissuade them from casting their ballots in the US presidential election.

Democratic Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel [announced Thursday](#) that Jack Burkman, a 54-year-old conservative lobbyist, and 22-year-old far-right fraudster Jacob Wohl had each been charged with four felonies “for allegedly orchestrating a series of robocalls aimed at suppressing the vote in the November general election.”

The charges, filed on October 1 in Detroit’s 36th District Court, were one count of election law - intimidating voters; one count of conspiracy to commit an election law violation; one count of using a computer to commit the crime of election law - intimidating voters; and one count of using a computer to commit the crime of conspiracy.

The robocall, [issued from 703-795-5364](#), falsely asserted that those who choose to vote by mail will have their personal information archived in police databases. It also erroneously stated the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was pushing to obtain mail-in voter data “to track people for mandatory vaccines.”

“This effort specifically targeted minority voters in an attempt to deter them from voting in the November election,” Nessel pointed out in her office’s release. Black Detroiters make up [78.6% of the city’s population](#).

She noted that attorneys general from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois and New York reported similar robocalls in “urban areas with significant minority populations.”

Nessel and Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson previously issued a [public service announcement](#) warning about the message and its use of “racially-charged stereotypes to deter voting by mail.”

If convicted on all counts, Wohl and Burkman face up to 24 years in prison and tens of thousands of dollars in fines. The 22-year-old is [also facing two charges](#) in connection to the unlawful sale of securities in California.

“We were not involved in this call,” Wohl told the Associated Press. “It’s no secret that we’re not fans of mail-in voting. But we’re not involved in this call in particular.”

Wohl claimed that Burkman believes “leftist pranksters” are behind the robocall, as the 54-year-old received hundreds of calls in recent days.



"Clearly this was meant by somebody to make it look as if we had sent out this call," he said, vowing to file a \$300 million defamation suit against Benson.

At the same time, Wohl told the AP that he does not believe the content of the call is racist.

State officials highlighted that residents of Michigan have been voting by mail via absentee ballots for over 60 years. In a state-wide vote in November 2018, "Michigan voters overwhelmingly approved Proposal 3, which amended Michigan's Constitution and gave all Michigan voters the constitutional right to vote by absentee ballot without excuse."

Burkman originally linked up with Wohl in October 2018, shortly after the Los Angeles,

California, resident rose to Twitter infamy - [and became a meme](#) - after netizens exposed a litany of questionable tweets ranting about conversations overheard at a "hipster coffee shop."

The duo famously failed to jumpstart a sexual assault smear campaign against [then-special counsel Robert Mueller](#) in November 2018. Their false story was ultimately eclipsed by [netizens](#) and reports [clowning Burkman's open fly at a news conference](#).

It's worth noting that this attempted operation was made public just days before the 2018 US midterm elections.

Burkman and Wohl [attempted to push similar phony accusations](#) of sexual assault against then-South Bend Mayor and Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg. The [Daily Beast](#) [torpedoed](#) the plot after obtaining audio of Wohl apparently attempting to coerce a man into making the allegations against Buttigieg, who was described by Wohl as a "terminal threat" to US President Donald Trump's reelection prospects.

Months later, the political fraudsters managed to get a man to claim that he was a US Marine Corps combat veteran having an affair with then-Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). The sugar baby story failed to gain traction.

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US House of Representatives Passes Democrats' \$2.2 Trillion COVID-19 Relief Bill  
by [Evan Craighead](#)

The Democrats' \$2.2 trillion COVID-19 relief bill was approved by a 214-207 vote on Thursday and now advances to the Republican-controlled US Senate.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-CA) COVID-19 bill advanced in the chamber on October 1, despite opposition from 18 Democratic members of the House.

Prior to the evening vote, the House speaker engaged in lengthy negotiations with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. Pelosi did not appear optimistic following the talks.

"Even if we came to some agreement, nothing is agreed to until everything is agreed to. It's the language," she said following the reported 50-minute phone call with the Trump administration official.

Republicans have argued that the congressional Democrats' bill, which has been slashed by some \$1.2 trillion since May, carries an unacceptable price tag.

"I would prefer to see something that hits the national debt ... less than \$2.2 trillion," said Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH), [as reported by Roll Call](#).



GOP lawmakers have also demanded the stimulus bill include a continuation of the \$150 billion tax benefit from the CARES Act that primarily benefits wealthy real estate investors. At the same time, Republicans have taken issue with the \$54 billion expansion of refundable tax credits for lower-income families.

Pelosi has contended that she is unwilling to budge much more to appease Senate Republicans.

"They still want to keep \$150 billion tax break for the wealthiest in our country, and have zero in terms of a refundable child tax credit and earned income tax credit that addresses the poorest of the poor," [said the House speaker during her weekly news conference](#).

"We're not going to exploit the needs that people have in order to once again increase the national debt to help the high end."

US lawmakers have continued to drag their feet on negotiations for the past few months, despite Americans' dire need for economic support amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The US Department of Labor [revealed on Thursday](#) that new applications for jobless benefits dropped by 36,000 and settled around 837,000 for the week ending on September 26.

However, several companies have announced thousands of layoffs amid a widespread economic slowdown across the country. Walt Disney Co. alone will be removing some 28,000 US workers from their jobs with the corporation, [Bloomberg reported](#).

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Viewer Beware - Political Cartoon

After the jaw-dropping first showdown of the 2020 US presidential debates on Tuesday, US President Donald Trump has come out repeatedly claiming victory in the first round.

Trump apparently views the ghastly, uncivilized debate which put America to shame as one of his best moments. He tweeted Wednesday that the contest had drawn the "highest cable television ratings of all time" for a presidential debate, as [over 73 million people tuned in](#).

Although the spectacle was impressive for perhaps all the wrong reasons, it still drew a smaller audience than the number of people who watched the first debate between Trump and Hillary Clinton in 2016.

Is The Donald trying to relive his glory days?